Remarks

Claims 1-16 are pending in the application. Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hand *et al.* (US 2004/0238319). New claims 17-20 have been added.

In response to this rejection, applicant has amended claim 1. It is now directed to at least three gaming components, each comprising a controller and a communications interface. When connected to the hostless communications link, each controller can communicate with each of the other controllers on a peer-to-peer basis without a master controller to control communications through the communications interfaces.

Admittedly, Hand *et al.* discloses a bezel having its own processor and a bill validator, also having its own processor. In addition, the bezel processor may communicate on a direct connection with the validator processor using a secondary interface. (It is apparently a secondary interface because communications other than direct between the validator and bezel must be processed through another interface.) But this discloses only direct communication between two devices. In contrast, the claims as amended disclose at least three gaming components connected to a hostless communication link that allows each controller to communicate with each of the other controllers.

Further, claim 3 is directed to such a system in which the three components are operable to communicate with one another without being processed or transmitted by the game processing unit. Hand *et al.* at best discloses such communication between only two components.

As to claim 4, although Hand *et al.* admittedly discloses a bill validator, it does not disclose communication on a hostless communications link between the validator and at least two additional devices. Rather it discloses a direct connection on a secondary interface to one other device, namely the bezel.

Concerning claim 7, although Hand *et al.* discloses communication between a component in the cabinet with a PDA or portable computer outside the cabinet, it does not disclose communications between each of the gaming components in the cabinet and components outside the cabinet as claimed. Rather, the PDA/computer communicates only with the bill acceptor processor "using either a serial connection with the gaming machine's door open or through an IrDA interface with the gaming machine's door closed." Hand *et al.*, Paragraph 0035.

Claim 11 includes further limitations relating to the number of components located on the inside and outside of the cabinet. The arguments above apply as well to claim 11. In addition, new claims 17-20 are added specifying the components outside the cabinet. The only component disclosed in Hand *et al.* that is outside the cabinet is a computer or PDA that is directly connected to a single component inside the cabinet, namely a bill acceptor.
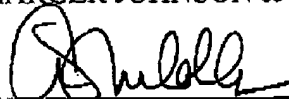
The examiner asserts that allowing communications on a peer-to-peer basis between different modules would have been obvious as would allowing such communication between the two controllers of Hand *et al.* Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection on this basis because there is no support for this statement. This is especially so in view of the amendments to the two independent claims that now require peer-to-peer communications among the controllers of three components. Reexamination and reconsideration is requested in view of the above amendments and accompanying arguments.

No new matter has been added by this amendment. Allowance of all claims is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

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Respectfully submitted,

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